

WYCOMBE OWE VICTORY TO AILING TERRY

MIDFIELD star Terry Reardon will long remember Saturday's 2-1 victory over Clapton, which took Wycombe Wanderers into second spot in Division One of the Rothmans Isthmian League, seven points behind leaders Enfield.

Reardon was far from well on arriving at the Spotted Dog ground, having not fully shaken off the effects of a mid-week illness. But manager Brian Lee selected him to play and the lanky Reardon responded by giving Wycombe the lead after 19 minutes.

However, that was not the end of his eventful day. Ten minutes into the second half he injured his ankle in a crunching tackle. He persevered for a further 25 minutes, during which Howard Kennedy increased Blues' lead, before limping off the field.

Two minutes after Reardon's departure Clapton pulled a goal back through a brilliant volley from Tommy Lee and the Blues had a few anxious moments before clinching their three valuable and most deserved points.

This was Wanderers' sixth league win on the trot and with the three teams above them playing in cup matches, they were able to leap into second spot. Although there is a long way to go, it seems that Enfield's main challengers will be Dagenham and the men from Loakes Park.

Enfield have yet to meet Wycombe this season, and should the Blues win both encounters in addition to their home match with Dagenham, they can still hold on to their ti-

By **MICHAEL KNOX**

Clapton 1, Wycombe Wanderers 2

tle which they won in most exciting fashion last season.

However, it is not just the big matches they must win, but the lesser ones as well. Saturday's game was one of the latter, for Clapton after such a promising start to the season are in the middle of a disastrous slump, having lost 5-0 in mid-week to Slough.

Their morale was doubtlessly shattered by the league's decision to deduct points for bad behaviour on the field. After appealing to the F.A. Clapton had the points restored but the damage appears to have been done.

Clapton announced in their match programme that they would in future take action against any of their players getting into trouble. They would be fined and suspended after each booking and any player offending three times would be dismissed from the club. Two sending-offs would result in the same punishment.

I doubt if this warning had any effect on Saturday's match. Clapton players were still inclined to dispute decisions — their main cause of bookings this season — and full-back John Ford was lucky not to have had his name taken for a series of clumsy fouls.

For the four coachloads and many carloads of Wycombe fans who invaded this ground, there was little to shout about apart from the goals. The match, which only occasionally burst into life, was a pedestrian affair.

The main reason was the pitch. From the press box it appeared smooth enough but

closer inspection revealed an uneven bumpy surface, bereft of grass in places. As a result the ball would suddenly rear like one of Dennis Lillee's bouncers.

Clapton, more used to the conditions, made the early running. They forced two unproductive corners within a minute and John Maskell had to be on the alert to halt a solid low drive from Lee after good work by the industrious John Tone and Jim Murray.

Wycombe, with Steve Perrin finding plenty of space on the right-wing, gradually forced their way back into the game and opened the scoring after a neat cross from Gary Hand had brought them their first corner.

Horseman curled the ball to the far post, where Alan Phillips headed goalwards only to see it nodded off the line by Bob Murray. The ball rebounded back to Reardon who struck home a fierce low shot. Murray once again tried to save but succeeded only in helping the ball into the top of the net.

With their back four pushing upfield, the Blues kept up the pressure. But the only reward they earned against a solid defence marshalled by Trevor Norcott was a series of corners. The home side had to resort to quick breaks out of defence and from one of these the balding Stan Spicer frittered away a good chance after Jim Murray had slipped round the back of the defence.

Wycombe's second goal, which came after an hour's play, had a touch of luck about it. Kennedy, running on to a Horseman pass, shot hard and

low. The ball ricocheted off Norcott and shot past the stranded goalkeeper, Alan Dear, who was caught completely off-balance.

In the record books it should, perhaps, go down as an own goal. But Northcott would be quite willing to give the credit to Kennedy, because during the previous defeat by Slough, he had apparently scored one of the best goals seen on the ground all season — past his own keeper.

Kennedy's goal appeared to sew it up for Wycombe, who, for the first time began to play up to the status of championship challengers. But the chances were not accepted. Perrin and Horseman both sent dangerous passes into the danger area, but there was nobody there to touch the ball home.

Searle mistimed a volley when clear, and then headed another cross into the path of Horseman, whose shot was saved by Dear. Keith Mead, who gave another polished performance at the back, blasted the ball over from a narrow angle as the Blues appeared to be cruising to victory.

However, Clapton kept plugging away with a limited supply of the ball and were rewarded with the best goal of the match in the 81st minute. Jim Murray backheeled the ball into the path of Lee, who volleyed it past Maskell from a good 25 yards.

This goal unsettled the Blues, who started to take risks with short-passing from their own penalty area. Spicer had outside chances of giving Clapton a

point. Maskell saved the first and Spicer shot the second clean over the bar.

CLAPTON: A. Dear; J. Ford, R. Murray, G. Dudley, T. Norcott, J. Tone, S. Spicer, T. Lee, J. Murray, J. Bull, D. Clarke. Sub: A. Taylor (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, G. Hand, K. Mead, A. Phillips, T. Reardon (sub: D. Alexander 79 mins.), S. Perrin, H. Kennedy, K. Searle, M. Holfield, A. Horseman.

Half-time: 0-1. Scorers: Wycombe — Reardon (19 mins.), H. Kennedy (60); Clapton — T. Lee (81).

Referee: C. Boswell (Gillingham).

DIVISION 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	CD	Pts
Enfield	25	21	1	3	54	14	64	10	
Wycombe	28	17	6	5	34	23	57	1	10
Dulwich	28	17	4	7	48	24	55	4	0
Dagenham	23	17	3	3	37	22	54	3	0
L'head	25	15	4	6	53	29	49	5	0
Ilford	25	14	5	6	56	32	47	4	0
Sutton	30	14	3	13	52	44	45	2	0
Tooting	24	12	5	7	32	30	41	7	4
Slough	27	11	5	11	45	35	38	4	0
Hendon	28	11	5	12	39	47	38	2	0
Oxford	28	11	4	13	38	38	37	4	0
Kingston	29	12	1	16	33	44	37	3	0
Walthamstow	28	10	6	12	41	38	36	8	0
Barking	28	9	6	13	46	51	33	4	4
B. Stort.	24	10	3	11	32	36	33	3	0
L'stone	27	9	5	13	28	32	32	7	0
Clapton	30	10	2	18	37	62	32	18	0
Hitchin	23	9	2	12	32	42	29	2	0
Hayes	29	6	8	15	37	51	26	13	4
Woking	28	6	6	16	28	51	24	5	0
Wotton	27	5	3	19	25	71	18	5	0
Bromley	28	5	1	22	18	62	16	6	4

DIVISION 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	CD	Pts
Harwich	25	16	4	5	43	24	52	10	0
Staines	23	16	2	5	49	13	50	4	8
Chesham	26	15	4	7	49	28	49	4	0
*Tilbury	27	14	4	9	49	31	44	4	0
Harlow	26	13	4	9	43	37	43	7	4
Malden	30	12	7	11	36	36	43	6	4
Southall	25	13	3	9	41	34	42	4	0
St Albans	25	11	7	7	33	31	40	4	4
Horsham	22	11	3	8	35	29	36	2	0
Herford	27	9	6	12	28	41	33	7	0
Woking'm.	25	9	4	12	24	26	31	6	0
Croydon	28	7	9	12	39	50	30	9	0
Hampton	28	8	6	14	35	39	30	7	4
Avoley	26	8	4	14	25	44	28	3	6
Finchley	26	6	8	12	27	43	26	3	0
Carshalton	25	7	5	13	29	48	26	9	8
Boreham	24	5	10	9	31	38	25	10	4
Casuals	26	3	8	15	24	48	17	2	0

* — points deducted ineligible player.
C = Cautions. D = Dismissals.